

Community celebrates King's legacy

Overflow crowd attends MLK breakfast on Patch Barracks

Story & photos by Hugh C. McBride

A standing-room-only crowd filled the Crystal Room of Patch Barracks' Swabian Special Events Center Jan. 12 to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Three days before what would have been the slain civil rights leader's 75th birthday, the 6th Area Support Group and Headquarters, U.S. European Command, sponsored a King-themed community breakfast event entitled "Honoring the Dream: The Cost, The Struggle, The Sacrifice."

The federal holiday honoring King – which falls annually on the third Monday of January – was Jan. 19 this year.

A day 'on'

EUCOM Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. John B. Sylvester, who described himself as "a man who has benefited from the leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.," served as guest speaker for the event.

Though King embraced such tenets as nonviolence and civil disobedience during the turbulent 1960s, Sylvester said, his teaching can be applied to many aspects of today's society – including the military.

"The message is leadership," Sylvester said. "The message is change."

In her closing remarks, 6th ASG Commander Col. Gwendolyn Bonéy-Harris noted that King's example of active service is reflected in the many January events and activities that are scheduled in his honor across the nation.

"This holiday is meant to be a 'day on,' not a day off," she said. "Let us not merely reflect on Dr. King's words, let us fulfill his legacy."

A community effort

In addition to speeches and a breakfast buffet, attend-

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Col. Gwendolyn Bonéy-Harris
6th Area Support Group Commander

ees were also treated to music by the Stuttgart Community Choir and Tech. Sgt. Larone E. Washington, an active-duty airman stationed at Ramstein Air Base.

The MLK event was a true community effort, said Sgt. 1st Class Carey Williams, equal opportunity advisor for the 6th ASG.

In addition to the various units and organizations that were represented at the breakfast, Williams said, an all-volunteer committee of nine service members and civilians worked behind-the-scenes to plan, organize and successfully execute the event.

A call for volunteers

With MLK Day 2004 now relegated to history, Williams said his office is turning its attention to February's celebration of African-American Heritage Month.

An organizing committee for Stuttgart's Feb. 21 African-American heritage event is already meeting Wednesdays at noon in the Patch Community Club. Williams said additional volunteers are welcome to participate.

For more information or to volunteer call 421-2892/civ. 0711-729-2892 or e-mail williamsc@6asg.army.mil.



[Above] U.S. European Command Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. John B. Sylvester speaks about the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Jan. 12 on Patch Barracks.



[Right] Tech Sgt. Larone Washington entertains attendees of Stuttgart's MLK breakfast in the Swabian Special Events Center.